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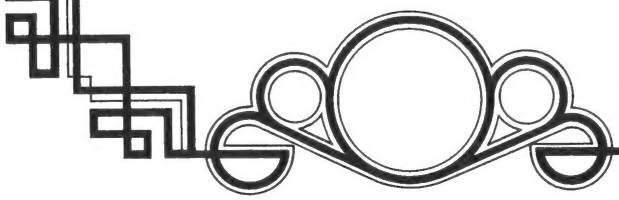

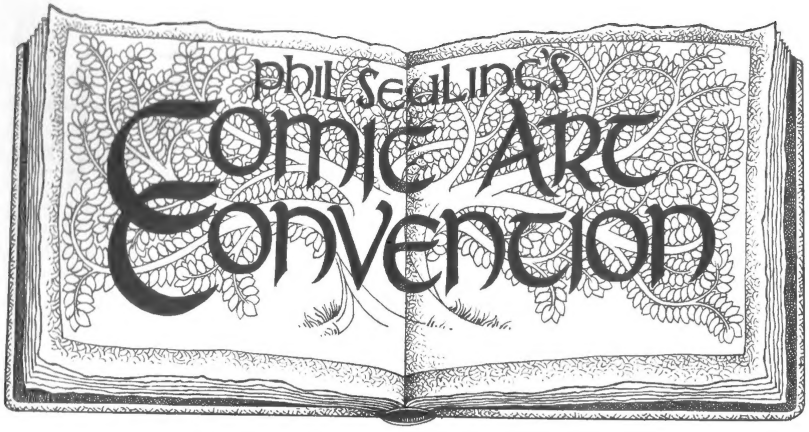

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Introduction

Very often I find myself having to describe the Comic Art Convention to people who haven't ever been to one, and the description is difficult to provide because of the many aspects of the Convention. Usually, when faced with a problem of how to describe something unusual, I can use a comparison with something else that is familiar to do the job. Therefore, I might be able to compare the Convention with a playground. Like the Convention, a playground provides things to please the eye, ideas to challenge the mind, events to excite our sense of wonder. Like a playground, the Convention is best when it is filled with people enjoying themselves.

A good metaphor, except that a playground is very much a neighborhood scene, local in its appeal, limited to whatever is near and familiar. Since the Convention on the other hand has always been national in its appeal and with regard to the people who attend, and since last year we moved to another city, and since this year we span two cities and two weekends, perhaps the "playground" is more of a National Park. **Big** comparison! Sometimes even that larger metaphor seems confined and cramped. Our guests this year are not only from Virginia, California, Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania, but from England and France as well. Are we an International Resort now, more than a "park" or "playground?"

Let's not stop there! In this age of space frontiers, why not exaggerate just a bit and call ourselves a veritable Galaxy of Graphic Greatness. Now that's got the proper feel, hasn't it? A **galaxy** is big and diverse and recognized for the stars it features. Just the same description fits the Convention, of course!

So welcome, traveler, to this Playground and this Galaxy! May your pleasures here be Infinite!

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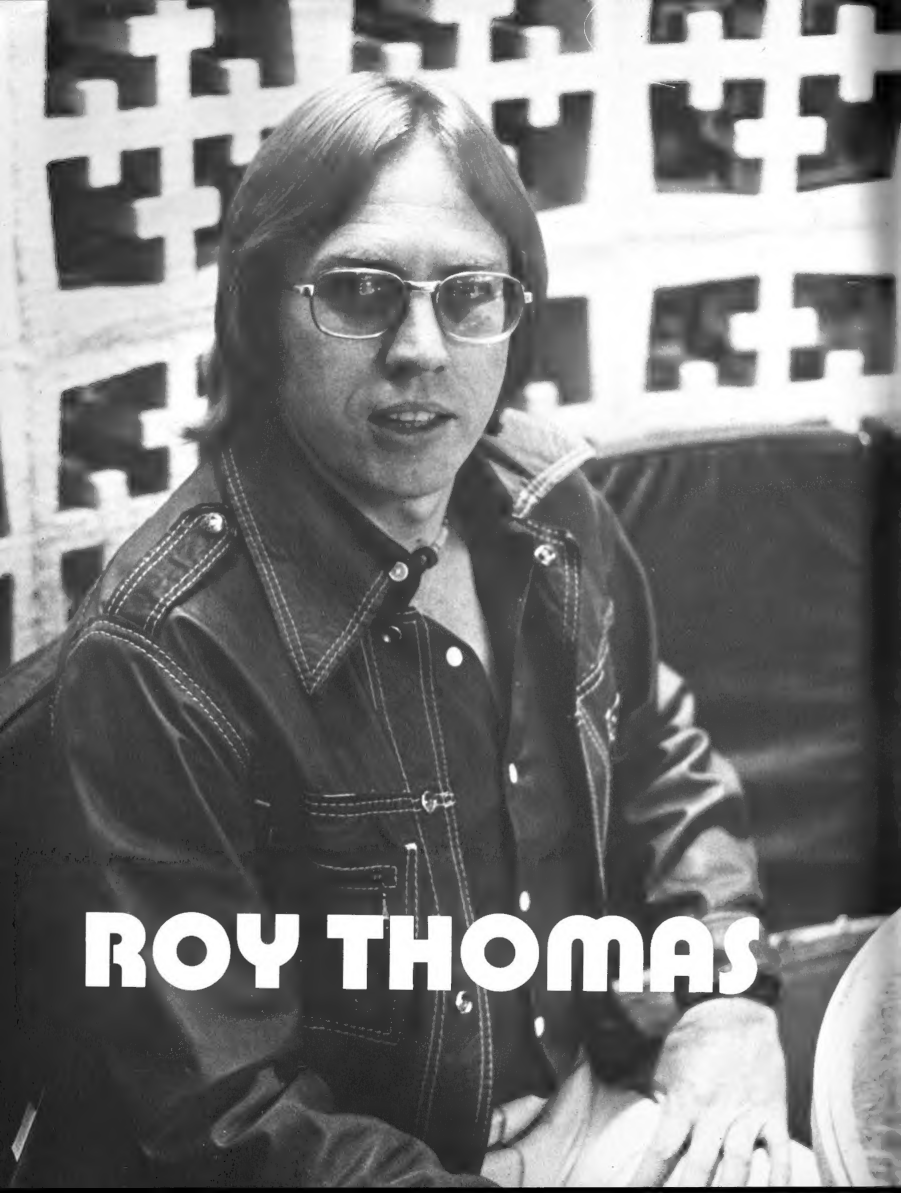
ROY THOMAS

DATA BANK

Just for the sake of fun and fantasy, come along with me and take a stroll through the brain of Roy Thomas. Don't hold back. You'll see what you've never seen before. It's the chance of a lifetime and a Marvel to behold!

Here, let's start over by that piece of whirring machinery. It's the Plot-Spinner, moving at an incredible rate of speed, as it must in order to supply all the characters in all his stories in all his books for years on end with things to do and trouble to get in and out of. You will notice, please, the **repeat** button there at the front, covered with dust. It is never used here, although lesser minds have worn out several **repeat** mechanisms without half the production of this particular brain. The rate of speed at which the Plot-Spinner turns is said to exceed anyone else's at this time. In fact no faster wheel turns anywhere, except one in this very brain, the Activator for the Tongue Mechanism. That one is not worth going to look at, since it moves too fast to be visible. And it is set on a hair-trigger. Such subtle designs as this give Roy his reputation as the unchallenged champion chatterer, the conversational cornucopia!

The linkage between tongue and brain also includes this pneumatic tubing for the immediate delivery when needed of Roy's reserve knowledge. During his planning for the new series of six **Red Sonja** novels soon to come from Ace Books, for instance, he might require the immediate recall of the body of Robert E. Howard's writing. Zip! And it is instantly available. Or he might need to know what happened a dozen issues ago to his current character. Again zip! Again it is there instantly. An excellent and efficient system it is, installed decades ago and smoothly functional still.

And here we are at the Memory Banks themselves, that boundless warehouse of stored data, encyclopedic in breadth. See how they stretch from horizon to horizon. Notice that they line up and extend into the distance! Awesome, the capacity of these machines. Frightening, to think of having to seek all this information elsewhere, or being able to locate it at will even if you have it. Yet, within this brain lie the plots and histories of the Marvel Comics pantheon of heroes, yea, unto the PSL days (pre-Stan Lee). Where but here could you expect to find the Warehouse Areas labeled 1940's, 1950's, 1960's and 1970's? Equally difficult to believe is their validity. Roy's knowledge comes first hand, not via hearsay or secondary research.

The array of speakers you see (and hear!) are the perpetually running Dialogue Dispensers. Tapes in endless streams are fed into hoppers leading to storage bins. Periodically these bins are emptied onto the desks of Marvel's editors and letterers

You're tired? Then let us cut our visit short. We can skip the separate production areas for the **Conan, Savage Sword, Thor, Invaders,** and **What If?** continuity, and the newly installed studios for TV and film production. Worth seeing, of course, but if you're tired.....

You have at least had the chance to see the wonders of the creative powers in the brain of Roy Thomas. Like the pyramids, or the Great Wall of China, we can appreciate its esthetics, but the overwhelming reaction is awe at the vastness of its scope!

THE WIND IS OUT OF THE WEST, AND IT BLOWS MOURNFULLY THROUGH THE RIGGING. INDEED, WRITERS OF THE WAG LANE FESTIVAL HAVES STRAIN TO REACH GREY, STORM CLOUDS OVERHEAD.
THRU THE BLEAKNESS OF THE FAST-DYING DAY, THE TRAILS OVER WAHANISH, 3RD CONTINENT OF THE WORLD, ARE WORN AS THE BARBAROUS LAND THEY RIVE NOW -- IE MAKING HIS STURDY CRAFT SECURE AGAINST THE CLUSTERING THUNDERHEADS.
SUDDENLY, ANOTHER MAN LOOMS UP OUT OF THE MISTS AS LAKE-MIST -- A MAN WITH THE LOOK OF WAR AND BREATH GATHERED AROUND HIM LIKE A CLOAK!..
WHO ARE YOU?
I NEED YOUR BOAT.
THE DEVIL YOU SAY!
NO CIMMERIAN ROGUE IS GOING TO --
MEN HAVE DIED FOR SAYING LESS THAN YOU ALREADY HAVE
NOW, ANSWER ME QUICKLY! WHAT DO YE STILL LIVE AND BREATH IN YOU!--
IS YOUR FISHING TODAY, DID YOU SEE A BOAT FILLED WITH ARMED WAR-RIORS -- AND HEADING TOWARD THE GULF OF STYGIOS?

HOT WHAT?!
I HAD TO DO THAT MUCH.
--FOR MY OWN SELF-RESPECT!
WELL, THAT CLEARS UP THE FOUL.
AND I'M HUNGRY ENOUGH TO EAT A DRAGON!
THAT WOUND NEEDS BANDAGE
I CAN WALK, LET'S GO. I DON'T EVEN WANT ANY OF THIS HAUNTED JEWELS
THERE'S PLENTY OF CLEAN LOOT IN THE WORLD! FOR YOU AND ME!
AYE GIRL
THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN'T CONQUER TOGETHER!
WELL, HAVE OUR FRIENDS TAKE A BACK BECAUSE THE STYGIANS OPEN THEIR POSTS FOR THE TRADING SEASON
AND THEN, BY CROM
--WE'LL CONQUER THE WORLD! WHAT PLUNDERING MEANS!

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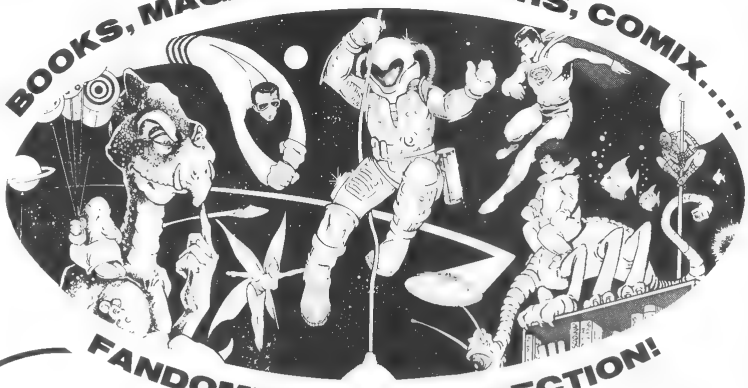

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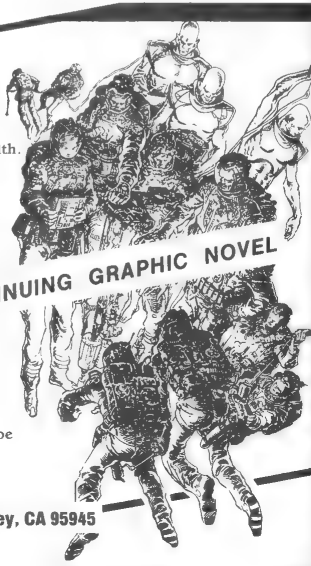

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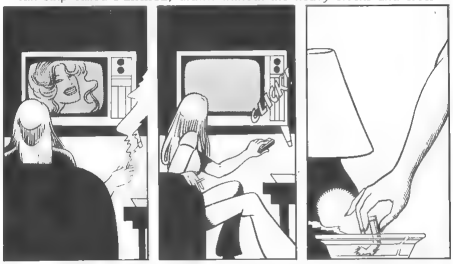
TRINA ROBBINS

MARATHON WOMAN

Keeping up with the activities of Trina Robbins is like interviewing a marathon runner during the race. Stop to make a note, and she's already a half mile ahead of you! Anyway, let's try.

Back in the sixties, some underground artists began a comic section to accompany the **East Village Other,** a newspaper. Remember the **EVO?** Remember underground comics? Remember the sixties? One of the moving forces was Vaughn Bode'; and the section called the **Gothic Blimp Works** included some excellent work (and some amateur-night embarrassments, too). There was one particularly bright spot, an ironic fun strip called **Panthea,** drawn without the heavy blocks and cross-



IT WAS HIS TURN TO WATER THE PLANTS LAST WEEK, AND NOW MY BOSTON FERN'S HALF DEAD! HE LEAVES HIS NOTES ON THE KITCHEN TABLE! AND DID YOU SEE WHAT HE BROUGHT HOME FROM THE FOOD CO-OP? HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO LIVE FOR A WEEK ON YEAST AND LECITHIN?

hatching and suffocating crowding of so many other strips in that paper. It was signed simply, Trina.

After that, for quite some time, Trina was the lone woman in this male domain. Purposely or not, the new underground comics medium was not only revolutionary **new**, but in the neglect of women artists and the portrayal of women in the stories, the underground movement was hidebound-conservative **old.** Trina did not rage at the skies about the unfairness of her lot. She worked instead at creating, and having published, quality work.

In her titles, **Wet Satin** for example, room was made for other women's work. Trina opened some doors from the inside.

Her work is now known world-wide. Her recent trip to Europe introduced her to the publishing field there, as a result of which **Metal Hurlant** will feature an eight-page story of hers, all in color. Another two-page science-fiction story appeared in **Cheri.** (Those two pages will be part of an exhibit at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art whose opening coincides with this Convention. Trina decided to miss the opening to be with us. A heroic choice.)

She continues to produce comics for today's more sophisticated un derground market. **Wet Satin 2** and **Mama Dramas** have just ap peared. The **San Francisco Bay Guardian** carries her continuing strip A non-comics project is a collection of grafitti from women's restrooms called **Women in the John,** which she has illustrated.

She lectures at universities and has assembled a slide show on the topi (her favorite topic) of "Women in Comics." To further promot recognition of women in this field, she has gathered an exhibit of wome cartoonists' work, shown until recently at the New York Comic A Gallery.

By cartoon or by lecture, by her art or by means of a narrated slid show such as she will present at this Convention, Trina Robbins com municates. And it is great credit to her experience and talent and researc that she has something of value to present. She is someone whose work worth knowing.

If you can keep up with her.

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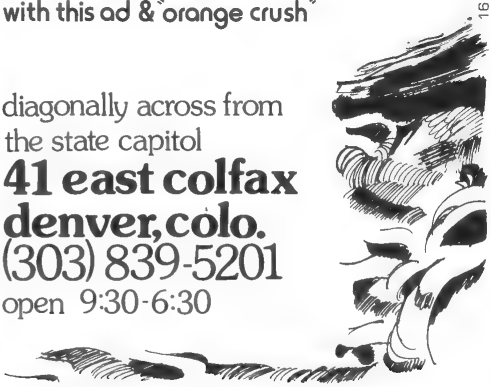
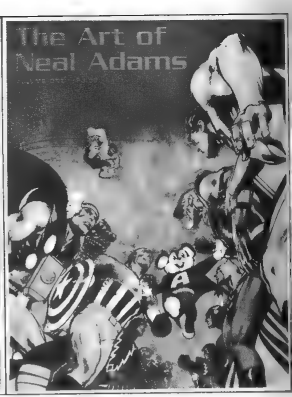


NOVEMBER 1976:
Richard Corben's "Dweller in the Dark" appears in Hot Stuf' #3.
MAY 1978:
"Dweller in the Dark" appears in Warren Publication's "The Odd World of Richard Corben."

JANUARY 1976:
The revival of Gray Morrow's "Orion" after a 10 year hiatus appears in Hot Stuf' #2 & #4.
JANUARY 1978:
Heavy Metal begins the "Orion" series.



MARCH 1975:
The publication of "The Art of Neal Adams - Vol. One"
JANUARY 1976:
Greg Theakston's "Pure Imagination" publishes "The Neal Adams Treasury."

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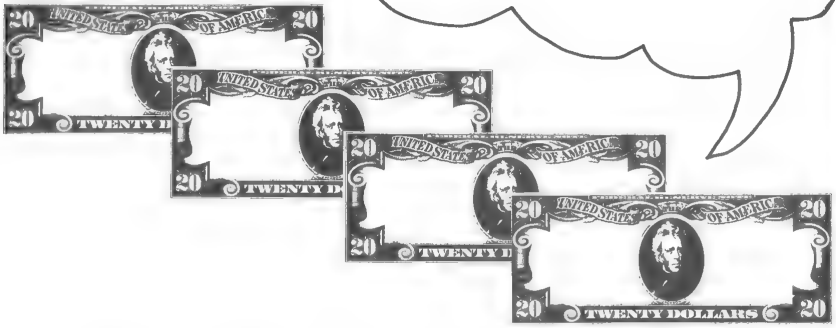

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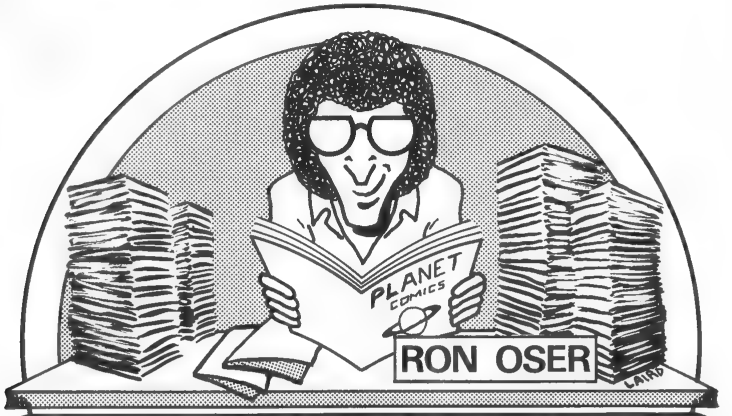

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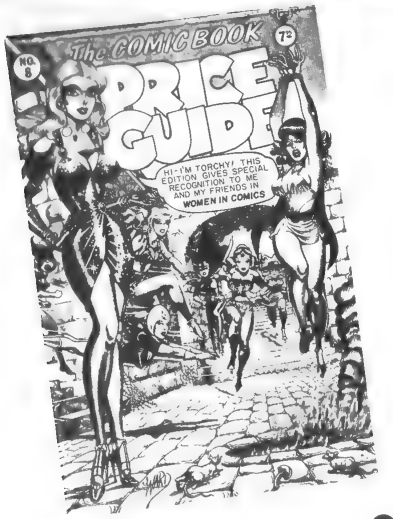
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JEFFREY

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JONES

THE COMPOSER

In the excellent film musical "The Glenn Miller Story", there is a fine, corny, sentimental moment when the struggling orchestra and its leader are making effort after effort to create the sound they are looking for. Discouragement follows disappointment. They can't seem to put it together. Then a small accident necessitates a rearrangement of parts. A shift of seats, a tentative beginning, and to a very slow beat the magic happens. There emerges a complete and harmonious whole - The Sound! Ahh!

The work of Jeff Jones might come upon your consciousness in a similar rewarding way. You would see his technique developing year after year, adding dimension continuously. In Comic books, you remember his approach was stylish, emphasizing shape and form. In the more free-form National Lampoon, his Idyl strip made you aware of the beauty possible in patterns of black and white. All without losing that feel for the geometry of shapes. When he turned to paperback covers, we could recognize that he had added color and warmth of tone to his repertoire. The posters gave us a glimpse into his talent for drama and romance. He had learned the attitudes which communicated menace or distress or hundreds of other human experiences.

The parts came to their harmonious confluence in his paintings. Along with the strengths learned from working in the various media, he had accumulated a knowledge, a useful knowledge, of rich painting techniques of the recent post. From Art Nouveau through Moderne, from the Pre-Rapha elites to the rich color and instant message of the poster artists of the turn of the century, Jeff had taken all the best parts. They merged in him. It was the sound. Ahhh!

It is a difficult-to-resist temptation to continue the musical analogy. Jeff works with themes and incidental music, with swells of sound and with silences, and he is very much the accomplished composer. His finished paintings are not reducible to the component paints and brush strokes; they are symphonically whole. They take your attention. They guide you through a related assortment of ideas. Your eyes, your intellect are engaged by Jeff's vision. You join him in his appreciation of his subject in a meeting of the minds. There is a feeling of having had a vicarious experience through the medium of his work of art.

Like music, the art of Jeffrey Jones is a universally understood language. His work is received as well in France and Italy as it is here. One of the most prestigious comics prizes, the Yellow Kid Award, was given to him in 1976 at Lucca in Italy.

Probably, his best work is still to come as his mastery increases. The anticipation is delightful.

This is one of the four artists whose work will be the subject of The Studio, a forthcoming book to be published by Dragon's Dream, probably in the fall of 1978.

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MICHAEL WM.

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KALUTA

SMOOTH SAILING

Mike Kaluta is a young man whose artistic sailing has been on calm and even seas up to this time of his career. His progress has been steady, sometimes with the current of public adulation, sometimes against it, but always pointed clearly in the same direction, forward. And he guides his own course.

Don't look for cataclysms or crises in his story. Aside from the talent, which is quite special, the events and situations he passed through were very much the normal expected ones. He might have been a restless and impatient soul, given the pattern of his parents' movement from state to state up and down the Eastern seaboard while he was young, with uprooting and upheaval and early theme. He began life in Guatemala, as a matter of fact, and was twenty before the family settled in Virginia. But there he was content to be. Later, when he came to New York City, this became his steady home. .

His art developed as might be guessed in his early public school training. There were thrusts forward from the John Nagy television art instruction series, and from specialized studies of abstract expressionism, drawing and painting. All streams coelesced in his illustrational style, which he was most satisfied with.

Influences? The usual vortex which draws admirers of fantasy and adventure art, with some impetus from stylists in design and decoration: Frazetta, Williamson, Krenkel, Mucha, Beardsley, Rackham, Parrish, Klimt, Clarke, Kley, Toulouse-Lautrec.

And some input from the medium of comic books. For awhile, his images were encapsulated in panels and borders. He drew Batman, Carson of Venus, and the Shadow. But his style needed a canvas larger, more focused. He shaped his works slower, and with care for color, detail, shading, Less to tell a story than to express mood and tone.

The drift was gradual but definite. Posters were a good expression of his maturing talent. Book illustrations were more appropriate since the words took over the story-telling chore, leaving his art to enhance and embellish. Two novels by Robert E. Howard used color plates and decorations by Michael William Kaluta: The Lost Valley of Iskander, and the Swords of Shahrazar.

He has found his metier. He is recognized and given awards for his success in his field. He is exhibited in galleries; he is often a featured guest at conventions of comic art fans. His course has always been set by his personal star, and he navigates well. It is difficult to believe he isn't just where he wants to be.

As one of the four contributors to The Studio, a forthcoming publication of Dragons Dream, and as the illustrator for a new version of the book Metropolis (of motion picture fame), Mike Kaluta's fame will increase. He deserves the recognition.

This is one of the four artists whose work will be the subject of The Studio, a forthcoming book to be published by Dragon's Dream, probably in the fall of 1978.

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BARRY

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WINDSOR-SMITH

POET

The comic book work done by Barry Smith was primarily on the Conan title in the early 1970's, just when Marvel Comics introduced the character into its books. Those of us who have read Those comic books associate the artists name with Conan, of course, since it was Barry Smith who forged the images we now recognize as the wandering Barbarian. Conan is crude, and primal, and expresses the beast in man; his bluntness is his attraction for us. Ironically, the main body of Smith's work is not prosaic and blunt. It is typically poetic in timbre, a quality not associated with a blood-letting primitive.

To allow the subtleties and delicacies of poetry to flavor his work, it was necessary for the artist to leave the comics field in which he had to labor on someone else's ideas. He could not be a poet for hire, but poet he intended to be. There were expressions to be rendered which were more than the comics demanded. This more artistic sensibility was his siren's song. He followed it out of the field in which he had gained his first fame.

Leaving one idea behind does not guarantee that a new idea is waiting. From the certainty of his income from comic book pages, Smith moved to the uncertainty of freelance income. Here was the Rubicon. In a relatively short time, he came to a hard decision. Rather than go back to being a hired pen, he would draw and paint and design for his own sake, striving to create artworks whose reproductions would support him in his efforts. If no one bought these reproductions, there would be no income. Then what? But misgivings didn't stop him. He plunged into his new way of life.

He founded the Gorblimey Press, the publishing and distributing mechanism for the art he produced. And then came the work: the sepia poster, the book marks, the posters, the elaborately produced prints. Cut off from any income other than that which he alone could generate, he brought forth beautiful works on mythic and legendary themes. The poet emerged. Linework with added color gave way to tapestries woven with paints and brushes. Tone and texture grew deeper and more diverse.

For subject matter, he plumbed the nineteenth century, adopting the romantic attitudes and postures of the Pre-Raphaellte School. Specifically a student of the William Morris ideals (art to be reflected in practical manufacture; beauty in all things, not isolated on canvases) Barry Smith produced his poetry.

He has come a long way from the time when Conan was the theme and his livelihood. His recent change of name to Barry Windsor-Smith, which incorporates a previously unused family name, might signal a new beginning. The poetry is there now, and it will remain.

This is one of the four artists whose work will be the subject of The Studio, a forthcoming book to be published by Dragon's Dream, probably in the fall of 1978.

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BERNI

PHOTO BY BOB KEENAN

WRIGHTSON

WHO IS HE?

You can know Berni Wrightson for a long time without ever being quite sure there isn't more to know. You can see shreds of....something, in his work, which leads you to expect odd personality traits, eccentricities, quirks. And all the while you know him to be the person you see - young, strong, normal, unsurprising, very much at home with people and places. The uncertainty about Berni Wrightson comes from seeing his work.

His subject matter is not completely without precedence. Edgar Allan Poe, Ambrose Bierce, Bram Stoker: all of these were fascinated with the end of life and what precedes and follows it. We have shared the shudders of all of them, and have no suspicions about the quality of health of their minds and attitudes. After all, they are repelled and shocked by the repugnance of their subject. They quake and quail as we do. Their trembling brings on our own.

Now about Berni.... It just isn't the same, you know. The grave yawns and shows us a tattered, tortured corpse, which reaches out to us. Berni draws this with a chuckle and eyes aglow. He loves it. These are his playthings, his toys and joys. Obviously, finding another mouldering scene to upset the collective reader's stomach is a personal triumph for this artist! Does he cackle and applaud with delight to see his artifice come to life? I think he d take the zombie to a disco, and laugh the night (and the crowds) away. He must be mad!

But his talent is eminently sane. He focuses our minds on his subjects, as any fine artist tries to do, and he forces us to see in it the values he finds. Not only fright and ugliness, but in the shadows and light, in the textures and forms, in the inherent vitality of his scene, we see beauty. We recognize the truth of his pen. Keats tells us "Truth is beauty; beauty truth. That is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know."

I for one would like to know another truth. There is one Berni Wrightson who is an artist on the rise, in the mainstream of life, much honored and appreciated, and whose biographical data are typical for his times. An altogether normal person. There is another Berni Wrightson whose skull teems with macabre sights and whose intellect germinates one ghoulish visual prank after another. He rides the nightmare and resides in Bedlam.

I would not feel so uneasy if I knew which one I were meeting, and whose hand I was shaking when I encounter him. You can know Berni Wrightson for a long time without being sure there isn't more to know.

This is one of the four artists whose work will be the subject of The Studio, a forthcoming book to be published by Dragon's Dream, probably in the fall of 1978.

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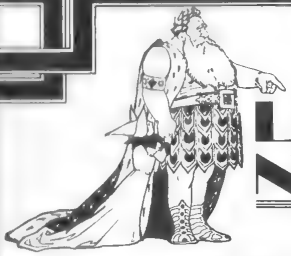

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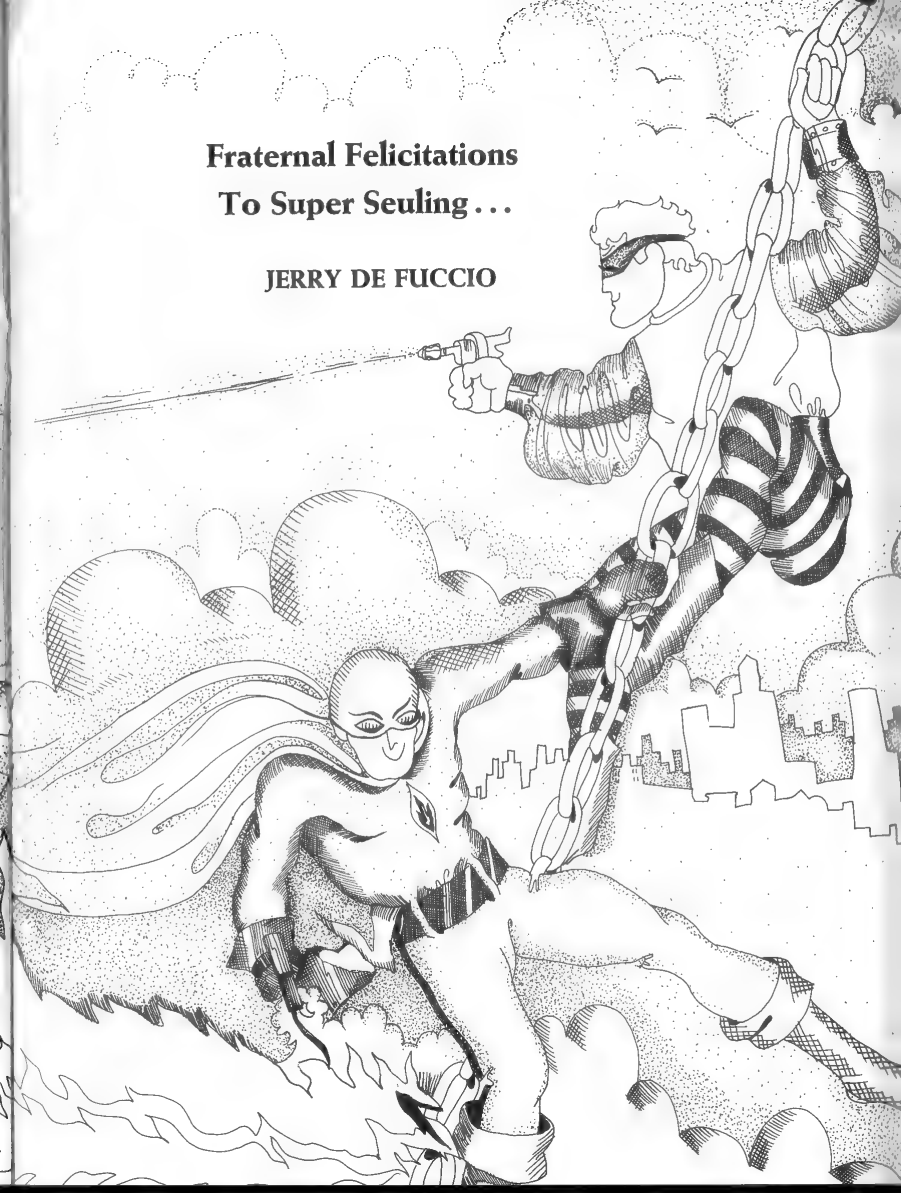
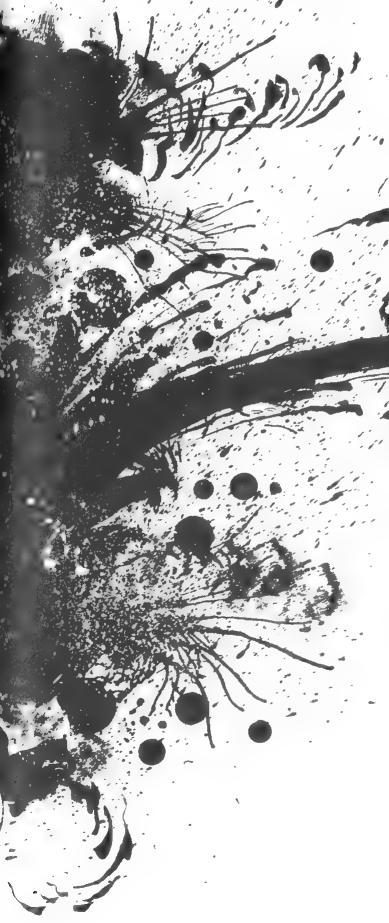


THE SPACE VOYAGES

OF PHILIPPE DRUILLET



By Jim Steranko
Reprinted with permission from Mediascene issue 23
January-February 1977

Ray Bradbury once said of science fiction writing, that "Emotion must carry the day, and then seeded within the emotion is the intellectual content. If you start thinking about a thing, you ruin it; you destroy it. By being emotional, by being immediate, by being quick, you are very truthful."

In that statement, Bradbury perfectly describes the work of Philippe Druillet (pronounced Dru-yay).

Journeying through Druillet's mad and fantastic universes, one is immediately struck by the emotional impact the artist has created, an impact which ranges from his selection of material to his gut-level rendering style, through the ultimate imagery and even the coloring. The same fire and force that originally went into the creation of each page bounces back at the reader with a collective energy that grows dangerously — and explosively — until the end of every book.

Over the past ten years, Druillet's science fantasy epics have been collected in a series of hardbound comic albums including **The Adventures of Lone Sloane, The Six Voyages of Lone Sloane, Delirius, Yragael, Urm the Fool, The Night,** and **Vuzz.**

Druillet's work has at first confined to the European market, appearing in magazines, and then in full-color hardcover books. Before the U.S. publication of his **Heavy Metal** appearances, his work was relatively unknown to the American audience. Now, with his work being showcased in **Heavy Metal**, and with **Lone Sloane** and **Delirius** published in English by *Dragon's Dream*, his genius is being given exposure outside its country of origin.

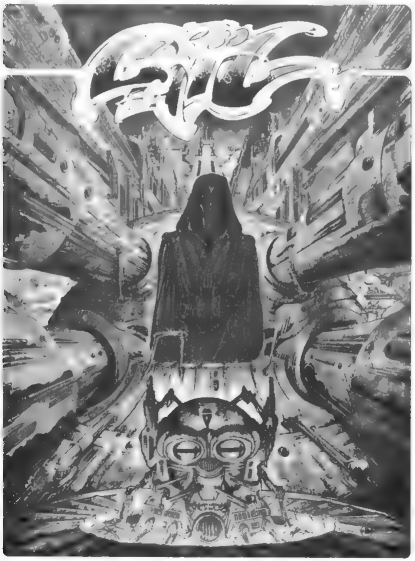
Somehow, it hardly matters, because the real wealth of Druillet's work is in the illustrations, the art — and art is universal.

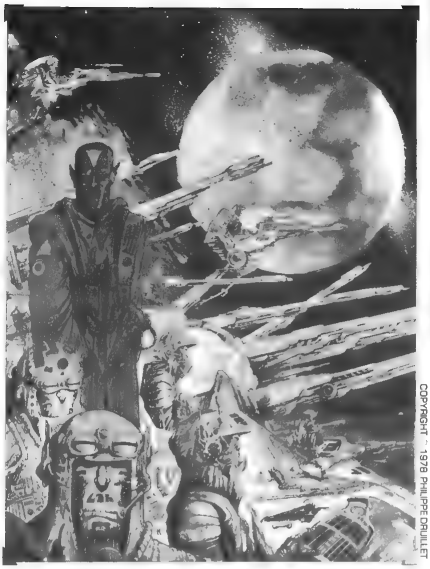
The storylines are frequently similar, always focusing on human affectations through a cosmic crystal: love, hatred, greed, revenge, pleasure, pain, cowardice and courage. Druillet fuses ancient legend, Biblical theology and barbaric paganism with science, sorcery and the supernatural to conjure up a frightening but fascinating mythos of our nightmarish future.

His visions are difficult to describe in words. The elements he uses to gain his effects are almost expected as one goes through several of his books: vast, towering structures of unearthly design covered with intaglio and bas-relief carvings; aliens and outworlders, always anthropomorphic yet grotesquely mutated; exotic weaponry, space ships and background machinery, often taking the forms of insects or animals; bizarre heathen statuary and fantastic architecture — all standard props of space opera, yet in Druillet's visions unique, fearsome and unforgettable. The indifference between his work and that of other science fiction artists is immediately apparent: they design universes, he *creates* them.

Druillet, now in his early thirties, was influenced by the writings of H.G. Wells and Jules Verne (whose work he collects in rare editions), and by contemporary writers such as Leigh Brackett with her John Eric Stark stories and Catherine Moore with her Northwest Smith tales. Michael Moorcock's Elric saga has also had a profound effect on Druillet and his direction.

Artistically, he admits being impressed by Alex Raymond's *Guy L'Eclair* (the French name for *Flash Gordon*), and by artists like Burne Hogarth and Jack Kirby. Nevertheless, his self-conscious and detailed linear style is closer to Heinrich Kley than Kirby, while his non-figure work often resembles that of Car Broutin and Wedel Dietterlin.





COPYRIGHT - 1978 PHILIPPE DRUILLET

Philippe Druillet is candid about the creation of the most famous character, Lone Sloane. "Under the influence of science fiction literature, I wanted to project my own ideas using this medium," he reveals. "I planned a character which was a mixture of personalities from science fiction, a little of what one would wish to be and of what one finds in literature and in films. Then, I looked for a name. First, Lone — solitary, good, the lost man confronting the universe. Sloane, it sounded good phonetically.

"In the early stories, Sloane likes only disorder. He is in a world of insanity where a human has difficulty finding a place. He does not participate, but for those who engage him in conflict, it is always a catastrophe. Sloane is inevitably imprisoned within a universe. It is very Lovecraftian, but with Lovecraft, the human heroes are always beaten, while Sloane inevitably escapes. He appears passive, but it is always he who calls the play. Lone Sloane is very old, 350 years. He lives in time and space and is originally from Earth. There have been crosses among the races of Earth and Moon in the epoch of migrations on the first planets. Sloane is a Terrestrian with a good many crosses with Venusians."

By today's standards, Druillet's early stories(collected in the hardbound, 80-page two-color volume **The Adventures of Lone Sloane**) were quite primitive and poorly drawn using straight panel to panel

format, the artist emphasized the erotic element within a science fiction framework. Crude as it was, it embodied the genesis of what was soon to come

The next book appeared in 1972, titled **The Six Voyages of Lone Sloane,** and won a series of awards for its author both in Europe and in America At last, Druillet had found the physical expression for his ideas about the human condition. In **Voyages**, he fused two classic themes, the quest and the odyssey, using the mad, tormented soul of Lone Slone as the catalyst for the action.

The Throne of the Black God begins in the 804th year of the new era after the Great Terror. The goal of mankind was to spread the seal of the human empire to the infinite river of the stars. Yet of the men who were sent into the universe, very few ever returned. Lone Sloane is one of those men, and his journey almost ends soon after it begins when his rocket's controls fail to respond to his commands. Sloane is saved from destruction by a hugh throne, a cosmic artifact, whose magical powers protect him as his ship explodes. The throne continues through the galaxy until its earthly occupant is discovered by a messenger of an ancient alien culture. Even though Sloane's journey has no equivalent in human time, he senses the dark evil surrounding the massive, carved throne and its mission. He encounters a dying civilization whose priests need a human sacrifice to bring their withering gods back to life After three nights, amidst the rhythmic chants of the priest and the inconsistent throbbing of the towering machines, Sloane is brought face to face with the Black God and becomes its pawn. The fantastic ritual climaxes with the pronunciation of the cosmic word — "be alive" — and a world-shattering upheaval. Then the universe is calm again, as the earthman with the mad eyes and the mysterious throne survive to continue their journey into the unknown

In *The Island of the Savage Wind,* an incredibly ornate pirate galleon powered by huge bat-like sails traverses the oceans of space with its crew of troubled souls As the shadow of death beckons them onward, a pair of scouts discover Lone Sloane atop a treacherous windswept monolith of rock. The tempest surrounding the solitary earthman is what the pirates need to move their vessel through the gulfs of space, and he is commanded to join them by their chief, Shonga Convinced that their captive has been enlightened by the gods, the marauders use Sloane to guide them like some archangel to the sacred treasures of the gods. Knowing they may never return, he leads them to a cavern of gold, inciting an orgy of greed and avarice among the crew. Their presence touches off the volcanic nature of the cavern and, because they are unwilling to leave the treasure, become forever a part of it in the cataclysm which follows. The earthman alone survives, now with a deeper knowledge of humanity, and a greater hope that his understanding will eventually permit him to find his way back home

In the third voyage, Sloane finds himself on a world of metal, ruled by robots who have slain their human masters He attempts to build a ship from the debris, but is thwarted by the murderous Koll Then, Sloane discovers an ally, *Rose,* an electronic mind who reveals that the planet's eerie music can control the robots and power the rocket through space.

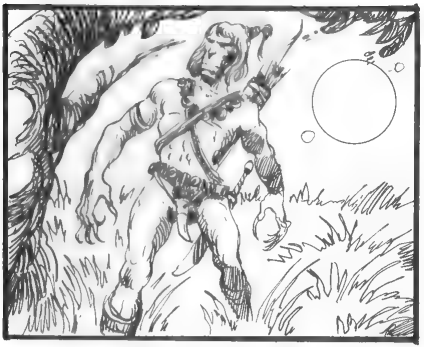
He escapes their oppression and enters the realm of Torquedara Varenkor, who controls the Bridge to the Stars. Boredom is the evil force here, and it is alleviated only when the Sultan Sorcerer captures the souls and wills of space travelers. Sloan becomes a prisoner, but is again saved by Rose, now in the form of a woman. She splits Sloane's personality into equal halves of love and hate, and uses the latter as an explosive force to destroy the Sorcerer and clear the Bridge to the Stars so that he can continue his journey.

Escaping on a huge dragon, Sloane encounters the ship, *O Sidharta,* and its human cargo. Despite the changes he has undergone in his previous four voyages, they recognize him as he reveals the secrets by which they can again return to Earth.

In the sixth and final voyage, Sloane returns to Earth only to find it inhabited by bizarre creatures — an Earth *without* men. In a dream, he learns that the gods have driven mankind from the planet and restored it to the state of its creation He is told to forget Earth, to go again into the stars to live in the corruption and violence of the human universe.

Throughout **Voyages** Druillet's fascination with technology is apparent, even down to the very structure of the page layouts, often symmetrical and machine-like, completely breaking with the narrative panel techinque of traditional comics. His draftsmanship has matured considerably, to the point where it truly begins to serve the artist's imagination. He has neatly incorporated optical effects and color solarization, in addition to the convoluted perspectives of M.C. Escher. Full and double-page illustrations punctuate the saga Like Kirby, Druillet understands that he can do what no filmmaker ever can — produce a series of scenes of *unequalled* spectacle and scope

Delirius begins where **Voyages** leaves off. The title refers to a hedonistic world, a galactic Sodom and Gomorrah, where all pleasures are a source of revenue for the tyrannical emperor, Shaan Repelled by this civilization, Sloan joins forces with a mysterious religious cult called the Red Redemption for the purpose of



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discovering the treasure Shaan has amassed from the violence and corruption on Delirius. Intrigue, revolution and death follow as the treasure is found and dropped over the warring factions as they battle. The conflict is forgotten and pleasure is superseded by greed, turning every individual against another. In the resulting turbulence, Delirius is destroyed by monstrous forces heretofore restrained by the society's vestiges of order. Sloane departs, pondering the meaning of Delirius, seeking peace elsewhere in the vast starswarm of space.

Published a year after **Voyages, Delirius** is a fitting sequel to its episodic predecessor, allowing Druillet to expand not only his themes but his graphics as well. Effects and techniques pursued in the first book are considerably more refined and the coloring noticeably improved. With the second book in publication, Druillet had, in no uncertain terms, caught the imagination and focus of the public and firmly established himself as a major European artist. Even with this in mind, he set aside the character of Lone Sloane for his next project, which appeared exactly a year later.

Yragael is an apocalyptic fantasy of creation and destruction played against the fantastic worldscape of Cemeroon, the realm on which rests the vision of past and future, a place at the end of time. Yragael is the ruler of Cemeroon and bearer of the vision who, like Odin, has given his eye for the wisdom of the ages. The book details his battle with the forces of evil magic.

Volume Two, titled **Urm, the Fool**, was released a year afterward in 1975. Urm is the son of Yragael, now banished, rejected, exiled to an existence in the desert — an existence spent denouncing the oppressive gods who have returned to dominate the planet and its people. By a twist of fate, he is recognized as the rightful successor to Yragael and is made king. Through his defiance of the gods and the power of City of the Dead, Urm brings about a renaissance to his world. Yet he finds he cannot rejoice for his followers become decadent and corrupt. Again, he is forced into the desert and killed, ironically, by a young dragon who symbolizes the evil he once defeated to save his world.

Together, the two volumes represent Druillet's best work. His approach to storytelling is less narrative than illustrative, features a greater number of full-page scenes, and appears to be heavily influenced by filmmakers such as Sergei Eisenstein.

Druillet's near paranoid line and imagery fit perfectly with the subject matter. Comic technique has been minimized; balloons and captions have been eliminated wherever possible; the lettering is a decorative, integral part of the design. The books seethe with emotional tension somehow projecting the *angst* of all future generations.

With **Vuzz,** Druillet returned to the traditional comics format to produce a black comedy about a barbaric hedonist on an alien world whose adventures are as grotesque as they are humorous. **Vuzz** represents the flip side of Druillet's personality, and exists as a kind of underground statement. It intentionally detours around all of the artist's repository of effects — gone are the full-page extravaganzas, the blazing colors, the fantastic machinery and psychotic action. Nevertheless, it is still Druillet all the way.

As a popular commercial success, it is remarkable that Druillet never seems to bend to popular trends; instead, he offers only deeply personal statements. Though his style and draftsmanship are hardly as seductive as that of Al Williamson or Wally Wood (whose works are essentially derivative of Raymond and Foster respectively), Druillet is completely and refreshingly original without precedent. All these, of course, contribute to his emergence at the top of the heap.

Druillet's latest effort is almost his most personal and most fatalistic, **The Night.** The story is a denunciation of death, specifically the death of the artist's wife, Nicole, who was taken by cancer in her mid-thirties. The action focuses on a society that might best be described as Hell's Angels of the future, and their ritualistic conquest of order. Their power is destroyed by the dawning of the sun, which is symbolized by the actual presence of the artist's wife within the story.

This book, like those which preceeded it, repeats Druillet's world-weary disillusionment. A statement at the conclusion of **Yragael** seems to sum up his message: "So everything dies, but only mortals have the privilege of growing old and waiting under death's shadow."

If there is hope, it lies within the very essence of the stories themselves and the fact that Druillet continues to produce them. Although his parables always culminate in death and destruction, we are ever aware of the beauty born out of the bizarre and the grotesque, and the cultural humor in the characterizations.

When asked about his ultimate ambitions, Philippe Druillet replies, "To create a whole universe of science fiction. It would be terrible to think of not doing it. I have worlds to create, characters to develop. It's what I have in me, and I want to experiment. I believe that I will always draw comics; they are among the most beautiful things that can be imagined — and they are true."

Maybe Ray Bradbury was right after all.

Steranko

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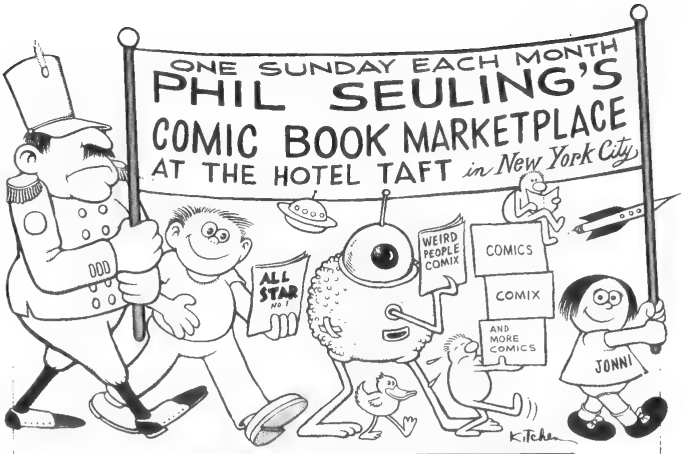

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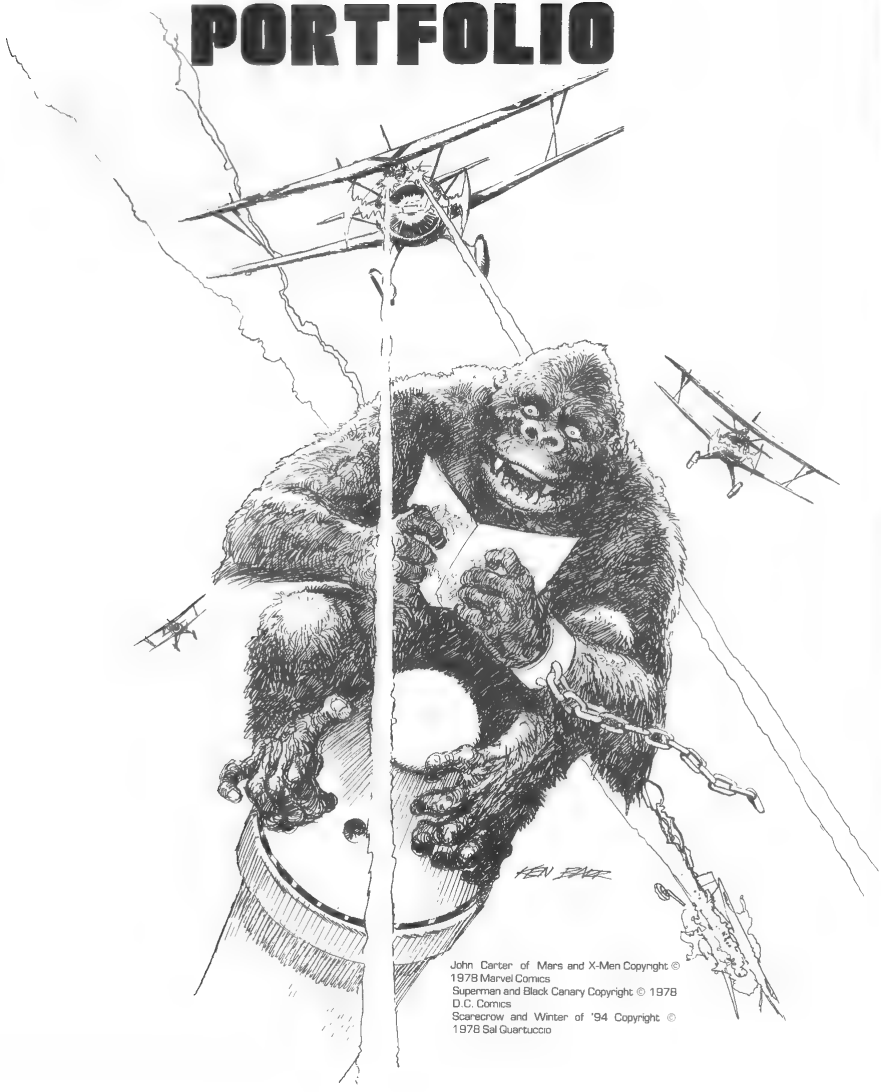

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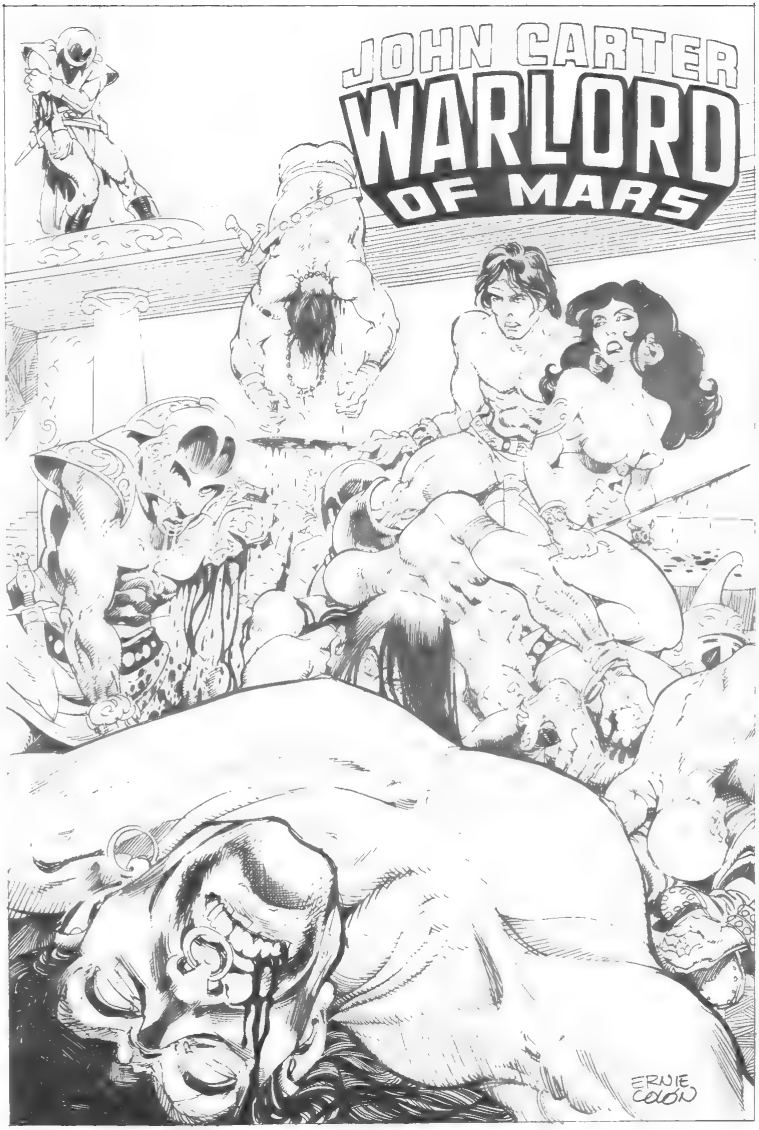
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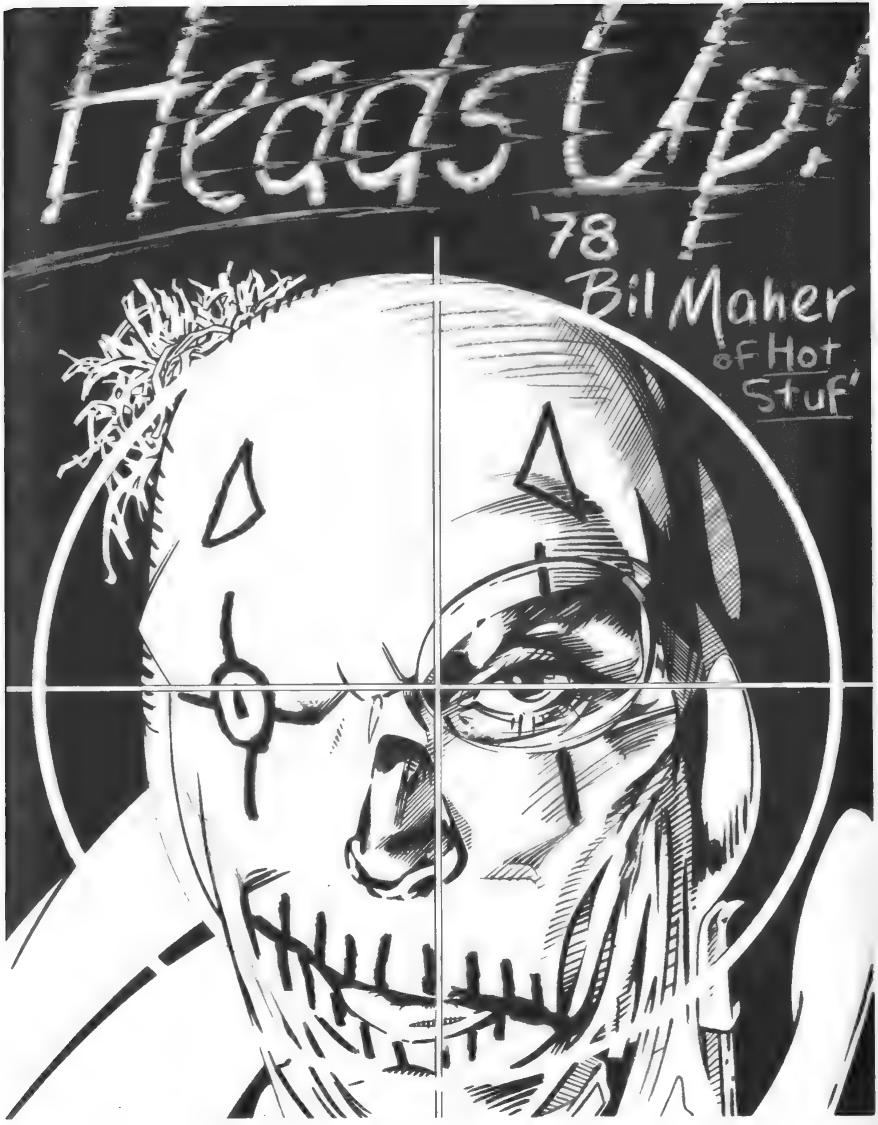
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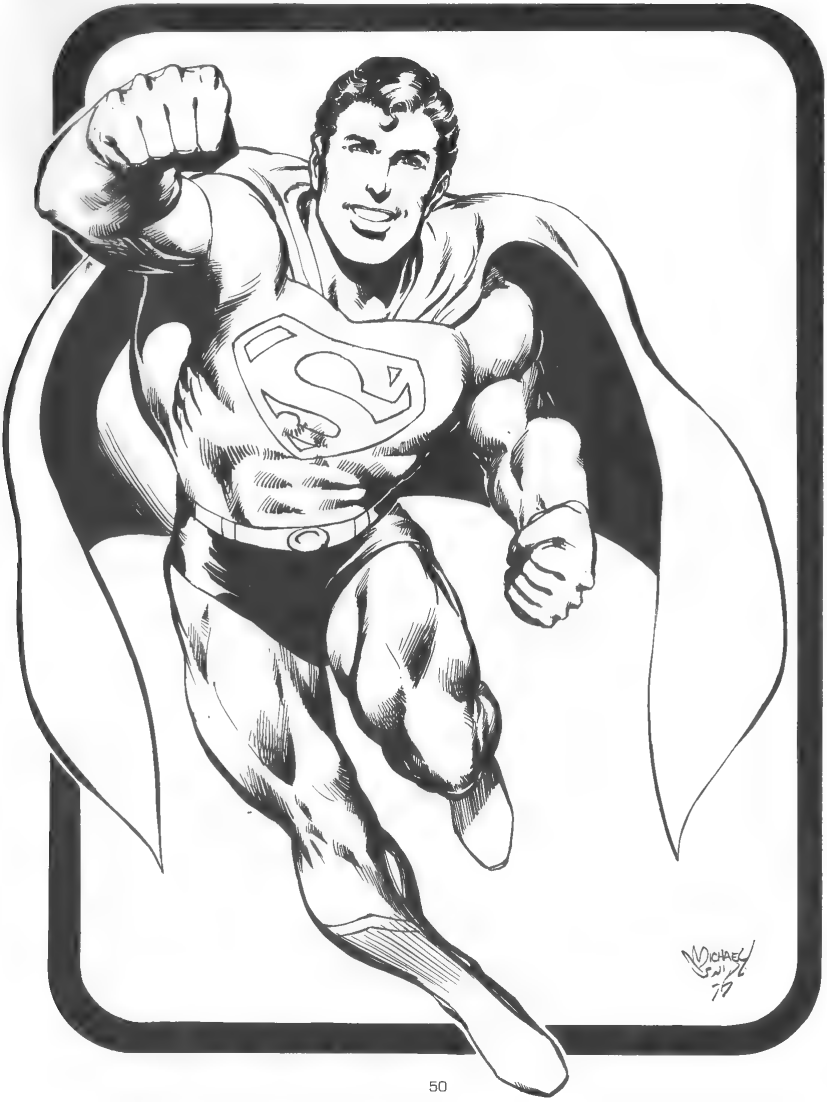

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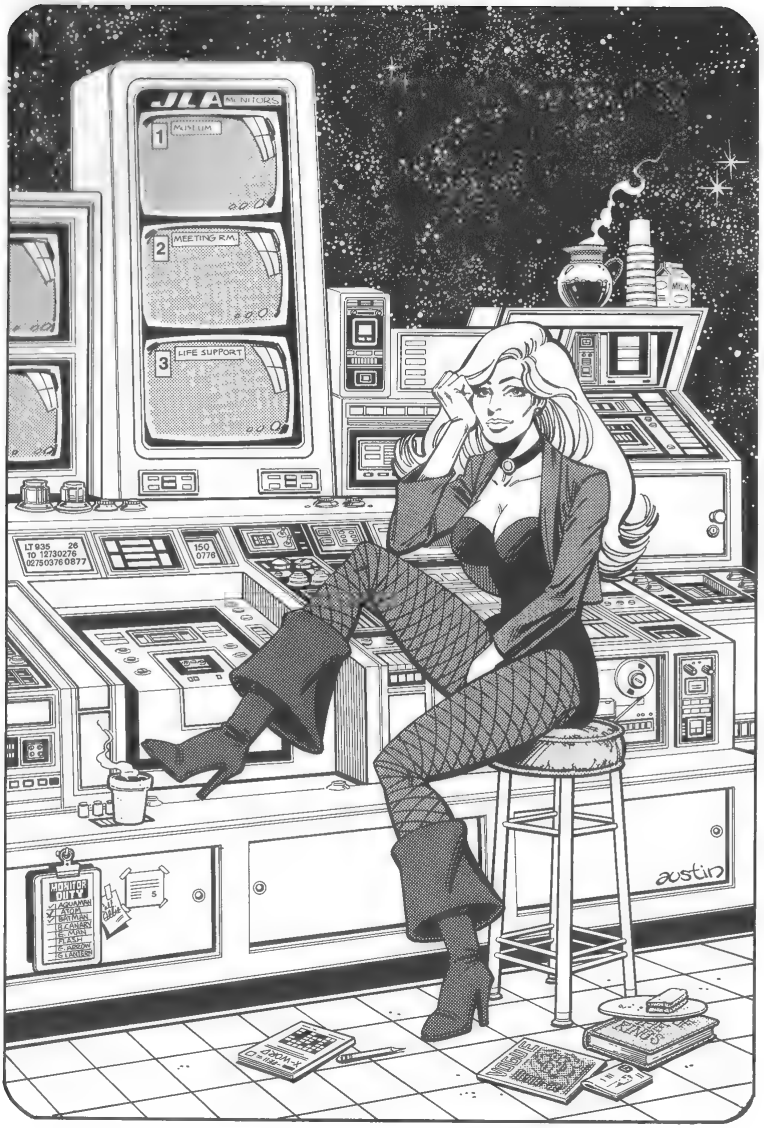
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THE 1948 COMIC ART CONVENTION

AS IT VERY WELL MIGHT HAVE BEEN IF IT HAD BEEN AT ALL.

A REPORT BY PHIL SEULING

WHO WOULD HAVE BEEN THERE, OF COURSE!

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BARBARA SEULING

When I got to the Hotel Pennsylvania opposite Penn Station in Manhattan I was nervous and my anticipation was rising minute by minute. I didn't know what to expect so I didn't know why I was excited, but I really was trying to keep myself calm. A fourteen-year-old kid biting his nails doesn't look too cool, and I tried to resist every time I found myself chewing at a thumbnail. On the trip to the Convention by subway I had already cursed myself out plenty of times for forgetting things I should have remembered to bring. A shopping bag or something. Those comics without covers I wanted to dump on someone in a trade. My want list (but anyway I knew it by heart). Now I was here. And I was weak in the knees at what might be there to see.

Maybe my folks would turn out to be right. The convention would be just another way of taking advantage of kids who were too stupid to stop reading comic books. "Especially at your age", they would add. They had a mental warehouse of examples of my misplaced trust which they would heap on me every time I wanted to make another venture into collecting comic book stuff. "Where's that subscription for a year? You only got three issues, didn't you?" That one hurt. "Did you ever get the Tom Mix ring you sent for?" No, I didn't. But I did get a badge and de-coder and all that went with it from the Junior Justice Society of America! Anyway, there were things my folks didn't know because I'd never tell them. Once I waited weeks for a Tom Mix comic book which had the criminal's name hidden somewhere in the book, the criminal from the radio series, of course. It was a contest - who could find the name first and send it in! They announced the winner three weeks before I received the comic book!

Maybe I **was** stupid. I was beginning to feel uncomfortable telling people about my fascination with comic books. I was now in high school! It's true I didn't feel odd telling people about my other manias, baseball, softball, skating, reading, but comic books? They sounded like kid stuff to most people. It wasn't often that I could find others who could laugh and enjoy themselves as much as I did when we recalled our favorite books, stories, characters!

This comic book collectors convention might be the place I would encounter more of my kind of people. I arrived at the registration area, paid my fifty cents and walked in. It took me a minute to absorb the scene. It wasn't what I expected but it wasn't different either. It was only that it caught me unprepared. The room was long and narrow and I couldn't see what was down at the end. I saw first of all the banners strung across the room by National Comics, which was made to look as if it was supported on one side of Superman and on the other by Batman. Somebody next to me said, "It looks symbolic. Those two have always supported the company." That was funny, and I wondered who this guy was who was both clever enough to use words like "symbolic" in ordinary conversation and comical enough to make me laugh. We told each other our names (just so we at least knew someone else at the show, I guess). He was Harvey Kurtzman. He said he was a writer for Timely Comics. **That** was interesting! But it turned out it was only a once-in-a-while page called **Hey, Look!** which was in **Millie the Model** when they had to fill some space. He drew it, too, but it didn't look like much to me. I didn't have the self-confidence to give him my advice, which would have been to learn to draw super-heroes and lay off the funny stuff. Comic books aren't really comic. Who reads the funny stuff? Maybe when there was nothing else around, I'd read **Archie** or even **Donald Duck** or **Looney Tunes.** I didn't know or care who wrote or drew them, though. Who would? I kept my ideas to myself, as I said, because he was a nice guy and I didn't want to hurt his feelings.

We wandered further in and separated to look at the different displays. Fawcett Comics was drawing the biggest crowds, as might be expected. National Comics may publish the most titles, but like other fans, I reach for **Captain Marvel** or **The Marvel Family** first! That's probably why there are rumors of an everlasting lawsuit against Fawcett by National to get them to stop publishing Captain Marvel. That kind of legal stuff must be a joke!

At the Fawcett Comics booth were three men with name tags on, artists and writers who produced the largest part of Fawcett's total output. They were C.C. Beck (I recognized his name from Captain Tootsie ads) and Jack and Otto Binder. I listened in on part of a conversation as Otto Binder reminisced about his reason for leaving science fiction writing to write for comic books.

"It was raining money! For sci-fi stories I was getting one cent per word. Comic book publishers were paying 2¢ per word. I couldn't believe it, but the checks kept coming in. I phoned Jack and told him to get down to New York quick before the golden goose died!"

Jack added that he had replied, "Yes, but how long could it last?" And Otto had told him it didn't matter. They could earn big dollars while it lasted. He **knew** comic books were only a passing fad!

We all laughed. Otto added, "I'm still trying to convince him of that!" And we laughed some more.

These were my kind of people. I was beginning to warm up to the idea of people with the same interests getting together to spend some time on their favorite subject. I hoped conventions were here to stay!

The next exhibit was a display of all the **Classics Illustrated** titles, which I passed by without much pause. I read them only when they were all there was to read, not by choice, and I still called them Classic Comics. I didn't even use them for book reports in school. I always read enough without having to fake it. There were displays I would rather use my time seeing.

I stopped by a small exhibit of Big Little Books, for a quick glance. I didn't even know they were still making them. Nothing interesting, though, and I kept going. The next table looked more interesting to a superhero fanatic like me.

The young guy (college age?) had a table and the wall behind it covered with comic books. They were samples of all my favorites and more - and were they in good shape! They looked as if they were never read, which turned out to be a ridiculous thought when I got to know the guy behind the table. He was Jerry De Fuccio who had read each and every one of his books thoroughly. He was a doctor's son whose father disliked comics. But Jerry kept the faith, and accumulated a library of what he called "classics." I agreed with the idea, but not enough to call them that. That title bored me as I previously explained. And why **collect** comics, when there were always new ones coming out? Wasn't it enough to read them? Sure, I had a bunch, but only for the sake of having enough to trade 50 or 100 for someone else's 50 or 100 which I hadn't read. Jerry, though, made his comics sound like books worth saving. That was a new way of looking at comics, the **second** oddest thing I heard of that day. Wait till I get to the first, later! You won't believe me. Jerry knew more about comics than anyone I ever met. He knew artists' names, and even writers' names. I only knew the names which appeared on the pages of the comics, and most comics didn't identify the creators. He gladly told me even more than I asked him about the artists who worked in this field. Setting up his collection on display was his way of contacting other collectors, maybe, and a way to meet some artists, too! I sat with him for an hour, like someone would sit by a gold mine he just discovered. When I left, it was with the strong feeling I'd stay in touch with him. When it came to comic books, he was maybe even more nuts than I am. So far it was the **people,** not just the books, which were making this convention a good time for me.

I back-tracked a bit to see a display across the aisle from the others. It was put on by Timely Comics and it looked kind of skimpy. I loved this company's characters, and I wished they were as big as the other companies. The Human Torch, the Sub-Mariner, the Angel, the Young Allies, and especially Captain America - there was a list of great reading. The war was over for three years by now, but I still got a patriotic kick out

of Captain America.

The guy behind the table was in his very early twenties and I figured that he was some office worker who was paid to come and take care of their display. He turned out to be the editor! He was Stan Lee, who had already been working at Timely for seven years! He had begun when he was 16 or so, and during the war had gradually become the only one left who knew what he was doing! Now he was in charge, and at an incredibly young age. If he continued this way, he'd be a publisher before long! He was giving away the original artwork which had been done for the comic books, but not many people were taking the pages. They were too big! I did take two pages, one by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, from Captain America, and a Sub-Mariner page by Bill Everett. Later on, I put them down somewhere and forgot them, but it doesn't matter. From what I can see, those pages of artwork are always available by the 100's and I can always get more. Stan gave away comics to everyone also, a pretty nice thing to do. I got a **USA** and a **Marvel Mystery.** After I read them on the train ride home, I got rid of them in a trade, so I felt like I made out pretty good.

I walked around the tables to the second aisle and started my way down. I came to the Entertaining Comics display, with their big EC symbol overhead. There were some interesting things for me here, but I was one of only a very few who bothered to stop and look. I'm a devoted radio listener. Whenever I'm home, I'm listening to one show or another from the **Shadow** on Sundays to the fantastic **Lights Out!** or **Inner Sanctum** during the week. On Saturday mornings I **still** listened to shows for kids. I'm never going to be too old for the imagination of **Let's Pretend** or the **Land of the Lost.** And to get to the point, E.C. published **Land of the Lost** comics.

"I wish more people liked our books", said the guy behind the table. "We're losing enough money to pay off Japan's war debts!"

I had to listen. It was the first time I heard anyone say anything negative about his own product. I asked if his Bible stories and his history comics weren't going well. I didn't read them (because I always knew how the stories would turn out) but I guessed most people would like them.

"Not **my** Bible and history stories, they were my father's ideas. He loved the idea of being a beneficial influence on kids. Me, I just want to destroy their minds". He was OK. I was going to enjoy this.

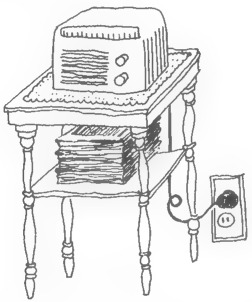
"Does your father still like the idea, if the books don't sell?" I probed for more talk. He was willing to keep the conversation going.

"My father's gone, passed away last year. But it isn't easy to change, even though it's up to me now. I'm looking for new directions. What do you like to read?"

"Batman, Captain Marvel, all the costumed heroes."

"How about suspense or horror stories?" he continued.

I told him about my love for fantasy show on the radio, but that you couldn't find much of that in comic books Maybe **Planet** comics, but that's all. I finally asked him his name



"Bill Gaines, publisher of E.C. comic books, and son of M.C. Gaines, who invented comic books," he answered, and I wondered if this very pleasant guy was ever really serious.

But he wasn't kidding. His father had really created the idea back in 1933, as a newspaper sales promotion. It was some story! Wherever I went there were great stories! This convention was the place for me to be. Mr. Gaines was willing to talk some more about his plans for his company, his castles in the air, but I wanted to see the rest of the place and left him talking to some other people

I remembered something I had wanted to do as soon as I came in, and I went back to the registration desk.

"Who organized this convention?" I asked. The guy next to the ticket-seller said "I'm Julius Schwartz. I organized it. If you have a complaint, I'll listen, but I'm not giving your money back!" I was in good spirits and I was sure that that was his kind of humor, but I'll bet plenty of people would have taken him seriously!

"Congratulations," I told him. "How did you get the idea?"

"From science-fiction. I organized (or helped to plan) the first science-fiction convention back in 1939. This is very similar, because comic books are an offshoot of sci-fi. Did you know that?"

I thought he was very wrong. Comic books came from comic strips originally.

"Not **original** comic books! Which was the first original comic book hero? Superman, from Krypton, right? Those two kids..."

"What two kids?"

"Jerry and Joe. Siegel and Schuster! They were young sci-fi fans who made up their own science-fiction story, called **Superman.** And **now,** look!"

I'm still not sure I consider comic books a science-fiction sub-division, but I enjoyed his argument. He told me I could see Siegel and Schuster in the next room. I got there in the middle of a spirited talk by the best-known artist and writer in the comic book field. Jerry Siegel was doing most of the talking, with Joe Schuster in full support. The topic was supposed to be "The Creation of a Legend," or something, but I guess someone in the audience had asked a leading question, and now the discussion was about who owned the rights to the character of Superman. These men were arguing with National (or Detective Comics) about that subject at this time, and threatening to create a **new** hero for a rival publisher! That would be something to read if it ever happened. But surely the matter would be settled quickly.

I couldn't stay to the end. There was too much to see elsewhere. I paused where a small crowd had gathered around a table to watch some very young artists doing sketches and handing them out to the kids. One of them, Al Williamson was talking about having visited and worked with Alex Raymond. The other one, Frank Frazetta, only kept asking the Dodger score. As a Brooklyn Dodger fan myself, I knew how much the latest score mattered. I watched awhile, then went into another small room.

There was another speaker, and he had plenty of listeners. This was Charles Biro, a rudd-faced stocky man who obviously loved what he was talking about. I sat down. He published **Daredevil,** and **Boy,** and **Crime Does Not Pay.** These were favorites of mine because I liked stories first and art second. I hoped his kind of book, "Illustories" he called them, would be copied by others. They were genuine reading, not just picture books, and they were not only for children. An intelligent person could become involved in one of those stories and not be finished in two-and-a-half minutes. He would up his talk with a promise of more and better books to come. I joined in the applause with enthusiasm, even went up to shake his hand.

But no one was enthusiastic about the speaker. He took his place at the microphone while Mr. Biro was signing autographs, and made it plain that he was annoyed at this interruption of **his** time. When the crowd cleared, only a few people remained to listen to him. Which isn't surprising, since he was not an artist, writer, or anything in comics. He introduced himself as Dr. Frederic Wertham, a psychologist, and began to tell us how comic books were a detrimental influence on young people, just as radio and crime movies were. What an idea! And look who he was telling it to! I got up and walked out. For all I know he's still talking. Who cares?

I needed more comic books and less talk. I went back to the main room, and straight to the National-Detective-All American display under the Superman-Batman banner. Two men were hosts, showing the audience their exhibit. One was Bob Kane who drew Batman. A large drawing stood beside him and he used it to point to when he discussed his character. He insisted that Batman was more popular than Superman, which no one believed. The other man was Sol Harrison, a production man who explained all the technical points of printing comic books - the coloring, the inking, the lettering, the printing processes - everything. He had even worked on the very first comic books in 1933 and 1934, doing the etching on the glass plates that were used at that time. Interesting.

I finally made it to the far end of the room, where I really got my money's worth of crazy ideas. Here was a guy from upstate New York who had traveled all the way down to the city to set up a booth where he was selling comic books. Now that wasn't too strange, because I've sold comics myself. When they pile up, you have to get rid of them somehow, so you set up an orange crate for a seat and another for a table and a sign

that says 2 for 10¢ if they are pretty new, or 2 for 5¢ if they are older. Without covers, a penny apiece. But this guy, Claude Held, was selling old comic books for **more** than 10¢ apiece. I didn't see anyone buying, but there were plenty of kids laughing at the guy, who was just grinning and taking it good-naturedly. He was a rare coin-and-stamp dealer from Buffalo who had built up a mail correspondence with people like that Jerry DeFuccio I had met before. Only those people would pay high prices for books they wanted. I almost fell over when I saw Claude Held's price list! **Captain America 1** was on it for $2.00! Can you imagine a comic book worth two **dollars?** He showed us a copy of **Superman 1** with his price tag on it and it said $15.00! This was the wildest idea I ever heard, and not just at this convention. Every kid I knew would be a millionaire if comic books were worth dollars instead of pennies. And think of the fortune I must have turned in to the waste paper collections during 1941 - 1945 when the war was going on! At least we all had a good laugh even if Held's idea was a nutty one!

I hung around to talk to him when some of the other kids left, and he introduced me to a kid named Mickey Sullivan. Then the conversation got serious. There really **were** comic book collectors who paid to get rare books they needed. Mickey was one of them. He told me of a day long bus trip he once took to get to Claude Held's store, because Claude had gotten the first eight copies of **Jumbo** comics for him in excellent condition. The **Jumbos** were the size of **Life** magazine for their first eight issues. (I never knew that!) Mickey paid Claude $100.00 for those eight books. I stopped considering the idea crazy at the moment. Or maybe I lost my mind and the idea then **seemed** sane I don't know. But some day you might see me and my orange crate with comic books with dollar signs on them! I mean it.

The convention was not over yet, not by a long shot. In the next couple of hours I met some of the great comics artists. Jack Cole, who did **Plastic Man;** Creig Flessel, who did early **Sandman** covers and stories; Will Eisner, who did the **Spirit** sections I was sometimes lucky enough to find (we didn't get that newspaper in my house); Jerry Iger, who along with Mr. Eisner, started **Jumbo Comics** ten years ago; Joe Kubert, still in his teens and already working steady; Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, who did **Captain America** and dozens of other comic book characters.

Only the last two were any disappointment, and not because of who they were or what they did. After all, they were two of the friendliest and most magnetic people you could meet. We even teased them about all their "boy" books. After doing **Boy Explorers** and **Boy Commandos,** they were planning something called **Boys Ranch,** and someone suggested doing a comic book called **Boys Town,** with Spencer Tracy as a priest who wears a cape and a mask in this version. The disappointment came with their statement that their current project was called **Young Love.** They said it could be the biggest-selling comic book ever, but we all groaned. Who wants romance comic books? Less popular men would have been booed.

I stopped to watch part of the movies which were being shown during the convention. They had serials **(Batman, Capt. Marvel, Capt. America)** and some **Blondie** films. But I couldn't sit still. There was too much else to do. I visited the exhibits of the smaller companies, such as Fiction House, and MLJ, and Quality, and Fox. There were some companies obviously missing, Dell, for instance. Each company had its titles on display and some oversize artwork. The artist whose work was most impressive of all was Bob Powell, who did Sheena and other features for Fiction House. Somehow in comic books I had missed his incredible ability to do not only action and figures, but also expressions on faces. I became a Powell fan when I saw his black and white artwork! I encountered interesting people who were not artists or writers, too. A couple of very young kids were the center of attention for a large group of people, who kept asking questions of them. The kids, about six years old or so, knew the answers to **all** the challenges on their favorite topic - **All-Star Comics!** I wrote down their names, Roy Thomas and Jerry Bails. They were smart kids. A fellow named Bill Thailing was another collector I met, but he was primarily interested in newspaper comic strips.

Speaking of comic strips, I should mention some newspaper artists who were there. For instance, George McManus of **Bringing Up Father,** and Hal Foster of **Prince Valiant,** and Burne Hogarth of **Tarzan,** and Milton Caniff of **Terry and the Pirates.** They were like royalty, another world from comic book artists. At least that's how everyone treated them, and it appeared that was how they expected to be treated. All but Mr. Foster did a "chalk talk" which were **very** popular! They were excellent guests.

There was a comics fan panel which was pretty noisy. They argued about the price of comic books. They used to be 64 pages for a dime, and now they had dwindled to 56 pages (after a brief dive to 48 pages). Some people figured the trend to fewer pages might continue, but I can't see how they can charge a dime for less than 56 pages, so what can they do but stick to what we are used to?

I never would have believed it could happen, but by the time the convention ended, I was tired and filled to the gills with comic books! I had indulged myself in my favorite passion for twelve hours, and I had enough for awhile. I knew, though, that the convention itself had become an excitement of its own. Just as I wanted each new comic book with fresh enthusiasm, so I would want the next convention!

But who knew if there would be any more conventions. After all, this was maybe the only one ever. It was nice to think of conventions coming up each year, maybe even in various cities everywhere. But not every good thing that should happen actually does happen. Sure, the convention was great, a **really** good thing. But how long can a good thing last?

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